

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 INSE-00 VO-03

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CNO IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

CINCPACFLT IMMEDIATE

CINCPACREPPHIL IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, VN, RP

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ABOARD USNS HUDSON

REF: A. MANILA 12865; B. GENEVA 6777 (NOTAL)

1. AMBASSADOR GARCIA, DFA CHIEF OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS, CALLED DCM AUGUST 26 TO ADVISE THAT GOP CANNOT ALLOW 47 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ABOARD USNS HUDSON TO LAND IN THE PHILIPPINES AS REQUESTED BY EMBASSY AUGUST 24. GARCIA NOTED FABELLA REFUGEE CENTER ALREADY OVERCROWDED WITH 324 CASES PLUS PROSPECTS FROM TWO MORE BOATLOADS JUST RUN ASHORE; HE SUGGESTED WE COULD PUT REFUGEES ASHORE AT SUBIC NAVAL BASE; HE WAS ALTOGETHER ADAMANT AND MADE IT CLEAR HE WAS SPEAKING FOR FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO WHO "HAS BEEN TRYING TO REFUSE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM THE BEGINNING."

2. AFTER REMONSTRATING VIGOROUSLY WITH GARCIA TO NO
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AVAIL, DCM REQUESTED GOP TO RECONSIDER ON BASIS OF UN-

CONDITIONAL U.S. ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR RE-SETTLEMENT OF THE REFUGEES CONCERNED. ON THIS BASIS GARCIA AGREED, HOWEVER UNENTHUSIASTICALLY, TO RE-RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH SECRETARY ROMULO.

3. SUBSEQUENTLY, WE ADVISED UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE DHAR (BROTHER-IN-LAW OF INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON) TO PREPARE TO ACCOMMODATE UP TO 47 REFUGEES EXPECTED TO LAND IN NEXT DAY OR SO. ALSO, WE GAVE DHAR PARTICULARS CONCERNING THESE REFUGEES TO ENABLE UNHCR TO BEGIN CHECKING OUT THIRD COUNTRY POSSIBILITIES. INCIDENTALLY, DHAR SAID HE HAS HAD NO NEWS OF WERNER BLATTER'S ARRIVAL BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE, AS REPORTED REFTEL B.

4. MEANWHILE, CINCPACREPPHIL IS UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO TRANSFER REFUGEES TO ANOTHER SHIP AND THUS ENABLE USNS HUDSON TO PROCEED. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO POINT OUT TO DOD THAT A MAJOR PURPOSE IN THIS CASE IS TO PROTECT SUBIC NAVAL BASE FROM BEING USED AS A RECEPTION CENTER FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, AND THAT SERVING THIS OBJECTIVE AS WELL AS HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS NECESSARILY ENTAILS INCONVENIENCE ALL AROUND. THIS REGARD, WE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE THE USNS HUDSON TO DELIVER THE REFUGEES TO MANILA HARBOR FOR OFFLOADING AS SOON AS AUTHORIZED BY GOP. MOREOVER, WE CONSIDER THAT TRANSFERRING THE REFUGEES FROM ONE SHIP TO ANOTHER AND HOLDING OR LANDING THEM IN SUBIC NAVAL BASE AREA WORKS AGAINST THE LARGER U.S. PURPOSE.

5. WE OF COURSE FIRST AND SOONEST NEED WASHINGTON CLEARANCES FOR THE 47 REFUGEES ALONG WITH DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION TO OFFER GOP THE UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE PRE-REQUISITE TO THEIR LANDING IN THE PHILIPPINES. EVEN THEN WE CANNOT GUARANTEE FAVORABLE GOP RESPONSE, BUT EVERY DAY OF BUREAUCRATIC DELAY MAKES OUR TASK, AND THE REFUGEES' LOT, THAT MUCH HARDER.
SULLIVAN

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